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MEDIA RELEASE

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**FORMER VA EMPLOYEE SENTENCED TO 63 MONTHS
FOR DEFRAUDING GOVERNMENT AND ACCEPTING BRIBES**

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE -- United States Attorney Tom Colantuono and the Special Agent in Charge of the Northeast Field Office of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Inspector General, Criminal Investigations Division, Jeffrey G. Hughes, announced that Chief United States District Court Judge Steven McAuliffe sentenced Robert Mayer, a former employee of the VA Regional Loan Office in Manchester, New Hampshire to 63 months in prison earlier today.

While working for the VA, Mayer's duties included hiring contractors to repair, maintain and sell residential properties the VA was required to purchase when veterans defaulted on mortgage loans that were partially guaranteed by the VA.

When he pleaded guilty to conspiracy and bribery charges last March, Mayer admitted that he dishonestly manipulated the VA's contract award and payment procedures for four contractors to whom he awarded more than \$4 million in contracts over a five-year period. One of the contractors, John Burke of 4 Cross Road in Derry, New Hampshire, received contracts worth more than \$3 million from Mayer. In exchange for the contracts, Burke made numerous secret cash payments, totaling more than \$100,000, to Mayer. Burke also renovated bathrooms, installed central air-conditioning, repaired and made improvements to Mayer's residence at 4 Hidden Road in Salem, New Hampshire for free. He also paid other individuals to repair and make improvements to Mayer's home and a home that is owned by one of Mayer's relatives.

Mayer also used his authority as an employee of the VA to award government contracts to two other contractors, a plumber and an electrician, who helped Burke renovate the bathrooms and install central air-conditioning in Mayer's home for free. A fourth contractor who received contracts from Mayer, regularly mowed Mayer's lawn, installed a retaining wall along Mayer's driveway, and occasionally plowed snow from the end of his driveway for free.

— M O R E —

Mayer was also ordered to repay \$419,400 .00 to the VA. He will be on supervised

release for 3 years when he is released from prison.

Burke has pleaded guilty to conspiracy and bribery charges. He will be sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Paul Barbadoro next month.

After Mayer was sentenced, U.S. Attorney Colantuono stated, "I hope the citizens of this state realize that local, state and federal government employees who work in New Hampshire are honest, hard working and devoted public servants. The conduct involved in this case is truly an aberration from the high ethical standards they have set."

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bob Kinsella.

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